



SUMMIT OF THE EARTH: THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF BARDZR HAYK

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The northwestern part of Greater Armenia was historically known as Bardzr Hayk (Upper Armenia) or as Karin Ashkharh (Country of Karin). The area consists of a series of well-defined plains extending from east to west, bounded by the Pontus Mountains on the north and the Central Armenian Mountains on the south. It is watered by the upper arm of the Euphrates (Eprat) River, now the Kara Su, whose source is only a few miles northeast of the city of Erzerum. The Upper Euphrates flows westward through several plains and the narrow gorges that separate them before turning southward to join its lower arm, the Aratsani or Murat Su, in the region of Kharpert and on to Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. The Araxes River, too, begins near Erzerum and flows eastward several hundred miles to the Caspian Sea. Ancient historians and geographers called this region of Bardzr Hayk, with its broad meadows and well-watered pasture lands, the “bosom of the earth.”¹

Although this part of Armenia, the later Erzerum *vilayet*—has a definite geographic unity and was possibly the location of a proto-Armenian principality of a group known as the Hayasa, its firm political unity is not attested by any source prior to the end of the fourth century A.D. when it became identified as Upper

¹ Hratch A. Tarbassian, *Erzurum (Garin): Its Armenian History and Traditions*, trans. Nigol Schahgaldian ([New York]: Garin Compatriotic Union of the United States, 1975), p. 14.

Armenia.² All together, medieval Upper Armenia covered some 23,860 square kilometers (slightly more than 9,200 square miles).³ In the late Ottoman period during the 1870s, much of Upper Armenia was incorporated in the large vilayet of Erzerum. In 1890, Vital Cuinet showed the land usage of the vilayet to be as follows: arable, 25,500 square kilometers (9,840 square miles); orchards, vineyards, gardens, 15,860 square kilometers (6,120 square miles); forests, pasture lands, and mountains, 35,360 square kilometers (13,650 square miles). The plains were noted for their hot springs, twenty-seven of which were being exploited for their saltwater at the end of the nineteenth century. The entire province was rich in livestock, and some tobacco was grown in the *sanjaks* (counties) of Erzerum and Erzinjan.⁴ The high elevation makes the climate severe, with the temperature in December averaging 8 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit (or -13 to 2 centigrade). Blizzards are frequent, and snow lies on the ground for some five months of the year.

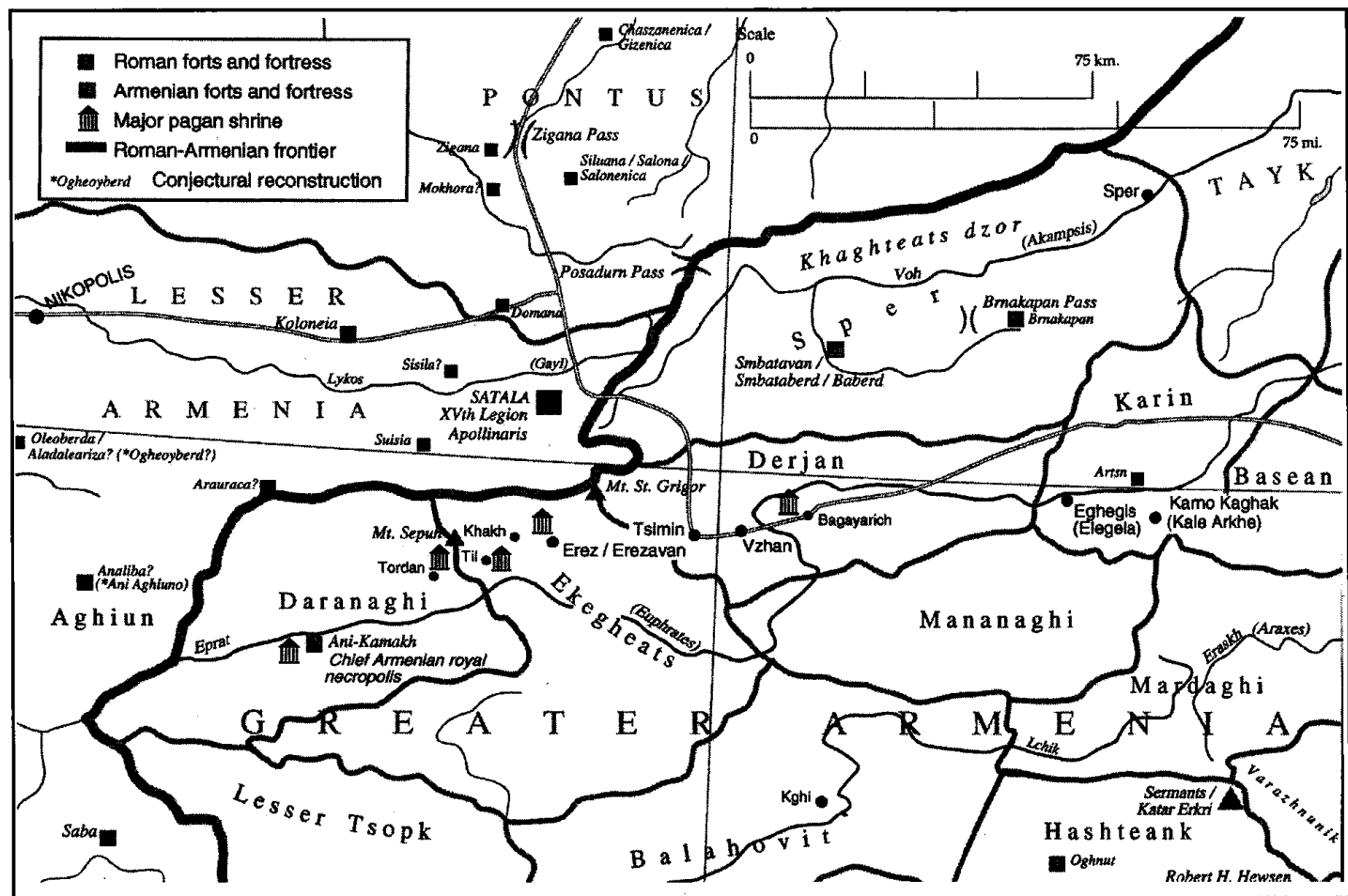
Ancient Karin

In the 380s A.D., sovereignty over Armenia was disputed between two brothers, Arshak and Khosrov, both of the Arshakuni/Arsacid royal house. The dispute was taken advantage of by Emperor Theodosius I of Rome and his counterpart, Shah Shapur III of Sasanid Persia, to arrange the partition of Armenia between the two princes in 387. One brother became King Arshak III in Western Armenia under Roman tutelage, and the other became King Khosrov IV in the east under Persian overlordship. The partition was uneven, as Arshak's kingdom consisted only of the northwestern sector of the country, with the lion's share

² Suren T. Eremyan, *Hayastane est "Ashkharhatsoys"-i* [Armenia According to the "Ashkharhatsoys"] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1963), p. 116.

³ Nicholas[Nikoghayos] Adontz, *Armenia v epokhu Iustiniana* (St. Petersburg, 1908), trans. and comm. Nina G. Garsoïan, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970), pp. 39-53, citations hereafter are to the English translation.

⁴ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: Géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1892), p. 133.



Northwestern Armenia in the Arshakuni/Arsacid Period

going to Khosrov.⁵

Arshak died in 390, and, whether he had heirs or not, the Romans simply annexed his kingdom and turned it into a province. It was the kingdom of Arshak III and its succeeding Roman/Byzantine province that gave the first prolonged unity to this region. Until the reign of Arshak, this part of Armenia consisted of nine districts grouped into six political units: one royal land, one principality, three temple-states, and one district owned by the Romans which had been a part of Lesser Armenia. These six political units were as follows:⁶

1. The royal land of Karin (Greek: Karinitis).⁷ This district was distinguished by its great swamp, the habitat of countless birds, as well as by its numerous mineral springs, especially the one at Eghegis, where the Roman emperor Trajan held his durbar after invading Armenia in 115 and where he announced his short-lived annexation of Armenia as a Roman province. Also lying in the Karin royal land was the town of Artsn, famed as a mercantile center in the Middle Ages and destroyed by the Seljuk Turks in 1049. Adjoining Karin on the northeast was the small and seldom mentioned district of Shataghagomk (Shatagh Stables) or Shaghgomk, which was probably a division of Karin itself and whose name suggests a possible connection with the Sala or Salua people of the pre-Armenian period.⁸

⁵ Pavstos Buzandatsi, *Patmutiun Hayots* [History of Armenia], 4th ed. (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1933), trans. and comm. Nina G. Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut'iwkn')* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), VI.1, pp. 233-34; Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1963), pp. 151, 363.

⁶ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 39-53; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 116; Robert H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhac'oyc'): The Long and Short Recensions* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1992), pp. 59-59a, 150-53.

⁷ Toumanoff, *Christian Caucasian History*, pp. 212, 215; Igor M. Diakonoff, *The Pre-History of the Armenian People*, trans. Lori Jennings (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1984). Movses Khorenatsi, *Patmutiun Hayots*, trans. and comm. Robert W. Thomson, as Moses of Khoren, *History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 142, says of Slak, the ancestor of the Sghnuni (Sała) clan, that it is not certain "whether he descended from Hayk or from those who were in the country before him," thus indicating a certain foreignness about the family that suggested to Khorenatsi a pre-Armenian origin.

⁸ Thomas A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological*

2. Northwest of Karin lay the principality of Sper (Greek and Roman: Sysperitis).⁹ This was an ancestral domain of the illustrious Bagratuni clan, who expanded to control most of Armenia and who around 885 A.D. restored the Armenian monarchy, dormant since the fifth century. The home base of the Bagratunis was the fortress of Smbatavan or Smbataberd, which may be the present town of Baiburt (Armenian: Baberd or Papert), located on the Chorokh River and still noted for its large castle. Alternatively, the Bagratuni center may have been at Sper, which had its own castle and nearby gold mines that were famed as early as the first century B.C.¹⁰ In the northern part of this principality was the land of a non-Armenian people called the Khaldians, the memory of whom was preserved in the alternative name for the valley of Sper: Khaghto Dzor (Khaldian Valley).¹¹

3. South of Sper and west of Karin was the temple-state of Derjan (Greek: Derxene), centered at the village of Bagayarich, where the great Temple of Mihr, one of the most important shrines of pagan Armenia, was located.¹² The shrine was situated along the main road through northern Armenia and was well known to the Romans, who called it the Temple of Baris or Lucus Basaro (Grove of Basarus),¹³ an indication that the temple

Survey, vol. 2 (London: Pindar Press, 1989), p. 217.

⁹ Strabo, *Geography* (Loeb Classical Library), 11.14.9 and 11.14.12; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 81; Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 152n10.

¹⁰ Toumanoff, *Christian Caucasian History*, p. 202; idem, "Armenia and Georgia," in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, pt. 1: *The Byzantine Empire: Byzantium and Its Neighbors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 612ff; Strabo, *Geography*, 11.14. 9.

¹¹ Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 55.

¹² Adontz, *Armenia*, p. 43; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, pp. 49, 116; Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 152n9. Strabo, *Geography*, 11.14.5, has Xerxene for Derxene. A temple-state usually was a large autonomous district that belonged entirely to a major pagan shrine. Besides great holdings in land, the shrine owned all the villages in its territory, with thousands of peasants and vast herds of horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The temple was protected by its own military force and was staffed by a host of priests and priestesses, musicians, singers and dancers of both sexes, and a corps of sacred prostitutes. The crowds of pilgrims that flocked to the temple at the festival of its patron deity added greatly to the income of the temple-state, which must have been a dynamic and influential participant in the life of the kingdom.

¹³ Adontz, *Armenia*, p. 132*, Peutinger Table XCV. Strabo, *Geography*, 1.14.14, states that the temple lay along the road to Ecbatana. This road through northern

contained a grove of sacred trees, the rustling of whose leaves would have been used in divination as they were at a similar grove at the Temple of the Sun and the Moon at Armavir.¹⁴ There were other places of note in this temple state: Vzhan (Greek: Sana; Bazanis or Bizana), which in the time of the emperor Leo (457-74) was renamed Leontopolis, and Derjan (Terjan), which in Ottoman times became Mamakhatun. South of Derjan and Karin spread the valley of Mananaghi.¹⁵ As the district did not have a prince, it could have belonged either to Karin or to the Derjan temple state, from which it was more accessible.

4. To the west of Derjan lay the clearly defined plain of Ekegheats (Greek and Roman: Akilisene), sometimes called the Anaitis district or Anaetica. This was the territory of the temple state of the goddess Anahit, the "Golden Mother" of pagan Armenia, another shrine well-known to the Romans.¹⁶ It was centered at the town of Erez or Erezavan, later known as Erzinka (Erzinga; Turkish: Erzincan/Erzincan). Within walking distance of Erez and still within Ekegheats was a secondary shrine, the temple of the goddess Nana at the village of Til. Farther away in the mountains and less accessible was the temple of the god Barshamina at the village of Tordan, where a Christian church was later erected and where King Trdat/Tiridates, the first Christian king of Armenia, and his queen, Ashkhen, were buried.¹⁷ There were other notable places in Ekegheats, including the town of Tsimin (Greek: Tsumina), which the emperor Justinian had

Armenia to Media would certainly have passed through Derjan, where the temple of Bagayarich was located.

¹⁴ James R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 52.

¹⁵ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 39-42, 116-17; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, pp. 64-65; Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 152n8.

¹⁶ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 40-42, 200-02; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, 50; Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 152n7; Pliny (the Elder), *Natural History* (Loeb Classical Library), V.24.20. Strabo, *Geography*, 11.14.16, gives a description of the cult of Anaitis.

¹⁷ Russell, *Zoroastrianism*, pp. 174, 235-53, 339. When I visited Tordan in 1999, the village headman pointed to a table-like stone structure in a corner of the ruined church and said: "A king and queen are buried there."

renamed Justinianopolis.¹⁸ Near Erznka was the royal village of Hakh, where King Pap (367-74) had a palace and where he is said to have had the supreme patriarch, Catholicos Nerses the Great (353-73), poisoned.¹⁹

5. East of Ekegheats was the valley of Daranaghi, which comprised the temple state of Ani-Kamakh with its shrine to the god Aramazd.²⁰ This temple was of special significance to the Armenians, for here at the fortified center of Kamakh, also known as Ani, lay the tombs of the Armenian kings, a most curious fact given that the kings ruled from their capitals far to the east and that when they died their bodies would have to have been transported by caisson, dragged along rough, unpaved roads over mountains and plains to reach the final resting place. This fact may be posed as evidence that the first Armenian kingdom came into being in this part of Armenia and that Ani-Kamakh, a most ancient site, may have been the original Armenian capital.

Daranaghi was unknown to Greek and Roman authors, and it is conceivable that this entire complex of four temples, Erez, Til, Tordan, and Ani-Kamakh, all belonged to the one temple-state centered at the shrine of Anahit at Erez and that Daranaghi was originally a division of Ekegheats. The origin of these five Armenian deities with major shrines in Upper Armenia highlights the diversity and eclecticism of Armenian paganism: Aramazd, Mihr, and Anahit were of Persian origin; Nana was the Sumerian and Babylonian moon-goddess Inanna; and Barshamina, the Babylonian sun-god Ba'al Shamash (Lord-God the Sun).²¹ South of Ekegheats and Daranaghi stretched the mountainous district of Mzur or Mndzur, a remote, little known part of Armenia, now the region of Dersim, which did not have a princely family and therefore probably belonged to either Ekegheats or Daranaghi.²²

6. Finally, to the west of Daranaghi, at the point where the Upper Euphrates turns sharply southward lay the little valley

¹⁸ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 116-17.

¹⁹ Pavstos Buzand, *Hayots Patmutiun*, V.xxiv, pp. 203-05.

²⁰ On Aramazd, see Russell, *Zoroastrianism*, pp. 153-75.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 171, 174, 339.

²² Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 39-40; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 72; Hewsens, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 152n6.

of Aghiun²³ or Ariuts. It appears to have belonged directly to the Roman Empire, for the Greek geographer Ptolemy, writing in the mid-second century A.D., mentions a district in Lesser Armenia called Aitoulane,²⁴ which, given the similarity between the letters *lambda* and *tau* in Greek script, may well be an error for Ailouane, that is, the district of Aghiun. That this district belonged to Rome is demonstrated by the fact that its chief fortress, variously called Analiba,²⁵ Analibla,²⁶ and Analibna,²⁷ was located on the Roman side of the frontier. The Soviet Armenian scholar Stepan Eremyan cleverly interpreted this place-name to be a Greek rendering of the Armenian Ani-Aghiuno or Ani of Aghiun, probably so called to distinguish it from Ani in Daranaghi, a short distance to the east.²⁸ The importance and longevity of this fortress—it stood for hundreds of years—would have been due precisely to its having been erected on the frontier between the kingdom of Armenia and the Roman/Byzantine Empire.

These districts combined formed the kingdom of Arshak III. There seems to have been no prior lasting unification of these lands. Once annexed by the Romans in 390, however, the territory was organized as a proper province, and a fortress was built to protect it from Persian aggression.²⁹ The fortress was Theodosiopolis, named in honor of Emperor Theodosius II (408-50), who is generally thought to have founded the stronghold in connection with Byzantine-Persian conflicts of 421-22 or 441.³⁰ To the Armenians, this fortress-city would be known either as Teodupaulis³¹ or Karno Kaghak (City of Karin), from which the

²³ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 47-48; Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 33; Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, pp. 252-53n5.

²⁴ Claudius Ptolemy, *Geography*, trans. Edward L. Stevenson (New York: New York Public Library, 1932; repr., 1991), V.12 and map 3 (Asia tabula terttia).

²⁵ Adontz, *Armenia*, p. 129*, Peutinger Table XCVII.

²⁶ Catholic Church, Councils, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, ed. Giovan Domenico Mansi et al., 54 vols. (Florence-Venice: A Zatta, 1759-1798; new ed., Paris: H. Welter, 1901-1927), vol. 11, p. 645.

²⁷ Ptolemy, *Geography*, 5.6.20.

²⁸ Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 33.

²⁹ Hewsen, *Geography of Ananias*, p. 150.

³⁰ Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 14-15, 19-22, 115-24. For a differing view regarding the founding of Theodosiopolis, see the chapter in this volume by Nina G. Garsoian.

³¹ Moses of Khoren, *History*, III.59, pp. 331-32.

Arabs would call it Kalikala.³² Earlier, the site had been that of a mere village whose name was rendered in Greek as Kale Arkhe. From the time of its founding, Karin-Theodosiopolis-Arzrum-Erzerum, located on the most practicable road from Asia Minor to Persia, became the largest city in western Armenia and remains so to the present, now in eastern Turkey. The fortress was restored and strengthened by the emperor Anastasius (491-518), who attempted unsuccessfully to replace the name of Theodosius with his own. Later, Emperor Justinian I (527-65) also took pains to restore the fortress, demonstrating once more its importance to the imperial defenses in the east.³³

As a province, the former kingdom of Arshak III was originally named Armenia Interior or Inner Armenia, probably because its territory lay within the traditional area of the kingdom of Armenia, but in the time of Justinian it was enlarged by additional territories and renamed Greater Armenia,³⁴ as if to suggest that by possessing this territory the Roman/Byzantine Empire owned the whole country. In the seventh-century Armenian geographical text known as the *Ashkharhatsoys*, this unified territory is called Bardzr Hayk, and there is no question that for the author the word *bardzr* means "high." This name was given to the region, he explains, because of its high elevation. In Classical Armenian *bardzr* does, of course, mean "high," but it also has a secondary meaning of "great."³⁵ Thus, while Bardzr Hayk does mean Upper Armenia, it conceivably might also mean Greater Armenia and simply be a translation of *Armenia Magna* or *Armenia Maior*, the Roman/Byzantine name for the region.³⁶

³² Hakob A. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. Nina G. Garsoïan (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1965), p. 133.

³³ Procopius, *Buildings*, III.v.3-12.

³⁴ Adontz, *Armenia*, p. 39.

³⁵ See Gabriel Avetikian, Khachatur Siurmelian, and Mkrtich Avgerian, *Nor bargirk haykazian lezvi* [New Dictionary of the Armenian Language], 2 vols. (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1836-1837; new ed., Erevan: Erevan State University, 1979-1981), vol. 1, p. 462, where the word is glossed as Greek "hypselos" and Latin, "altus, elatus, excelsus, sublimis." Matthias Bedrossian [Matatia Petrosian], *New Dictionary, Armenian-English* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1985), p. 96, offers "eminent" and "great" as secondary meanings of the classical word.

³⁶ Adontz, *Armenia*, p. 39.

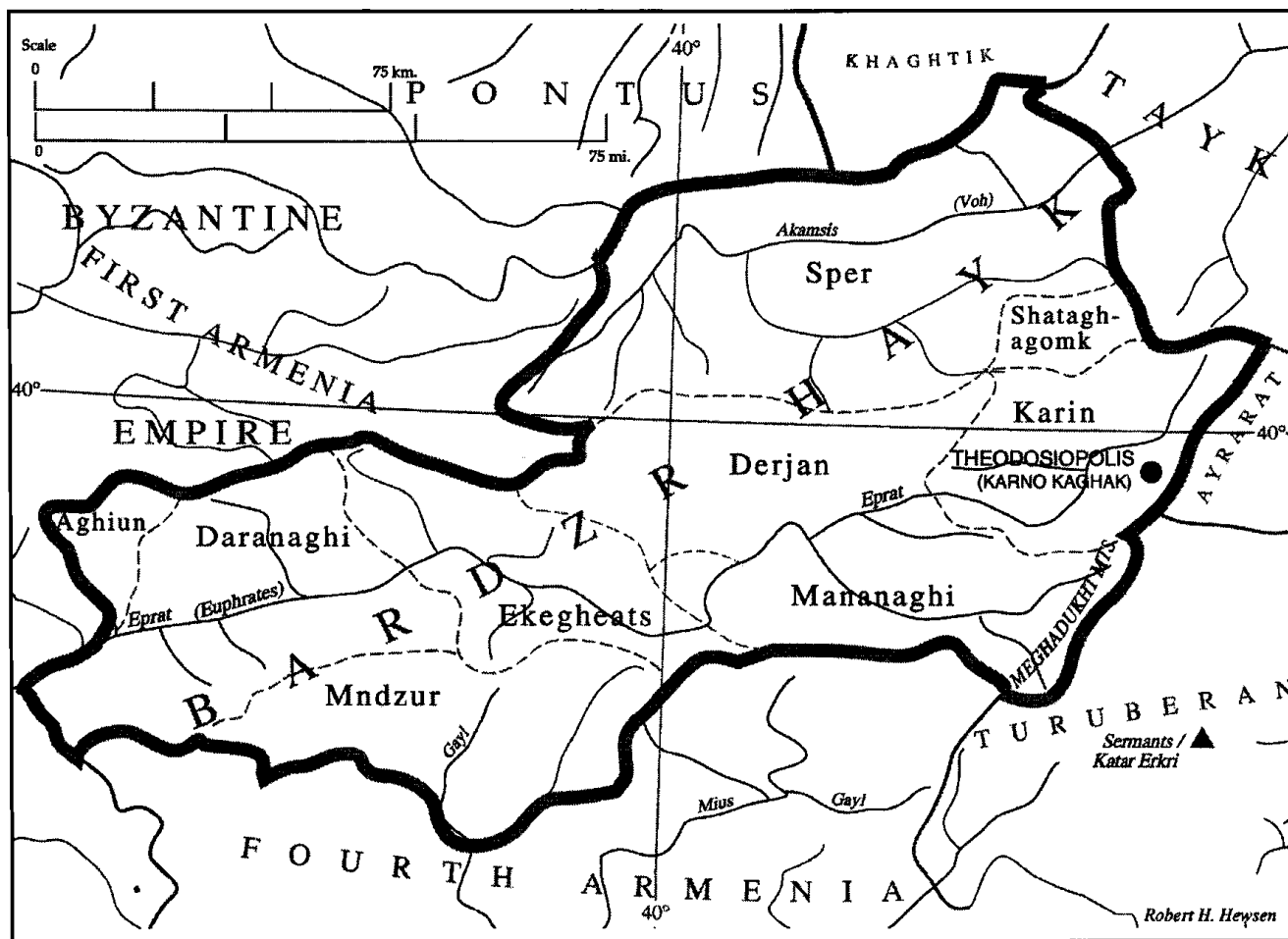
The reason that the Armenians called the Byzantine province Bardzr Hayk rather than Mets Hayk may be easy to explain. Mets Hayk or Greater Armenia meant the entire territory of the old Armenian kingdom. If Bardzr Hayk also meant Greater Armenia even if only in the lesser, Byzantine sense, the use of the synonym *bardzr* for *mets* would have avoided confusion between the two areas, one the land of Greater Armenia, long a major kingdom in Western Asia, and the other, the short-lived Byzantine province of the same name. Later, as a result of the reforms of the emperor Maurice (591 A.D. or shortly thereafter), the Byzantine province was reorganized and called Second Armenia, a name retained until the Arab invasions a half century later.³⁷

Medieval Karin

The history of this part of Armenia, like that of the rest of the country, was turbulent. With the fall of the Persian Sasanian Empire to the Arab armies in the 640s, the fortress-city of Theodosiopolis/Kalikala became a major bastion between the Byzantine and Arab empires. The city was often taken and destroyed. The Arabs initially captured Theodosiopolis in 653, the Byzantines regained it in 686, the Arabs again in 700, the Byzantines in 754, the Arabs briefly yet again, and finally the Byzantines in 949-79, when the fortress became the capital of the new Byzantine theme (military province) of Theodosiopolis. Briefly held by the Tayk branch of the Bagratuni dynasty, it was reacquired by Byzantium in 1000 and refortified in 1018-19.

Later, after the Seljuk destruction of the nearby unwalled city of Artsn in 1049 and the flight of its surviving population to Theodosiopolis, the latter city came to be called Arzan ar-Rum—Arzan of the Romans—probably to distinguish it from Arzan, another important city with a similar name in southern

³⁷ For Maurice's changes, see George of Cyprus, *Descriptio orbis Romani*, ed. Heinrich Gelzer (Leipzig: Teubner, 1890), pp. 174-75; Joseph Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1919; new ed., Lisbon: Librairie Bertrand, 1980), p. 304; Paul Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1951), pp. 290-301. For the local history of Theodosiopolis/Erzerum, see Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, chapter 5, pp. 185-292.



Bardzr Hayk (Upper Armenia) According to the *Ashkarhatsoys*

Armenia.³⁸ It is from the Arabic Arzan ar-Rum that the name Erzerum has evolved.

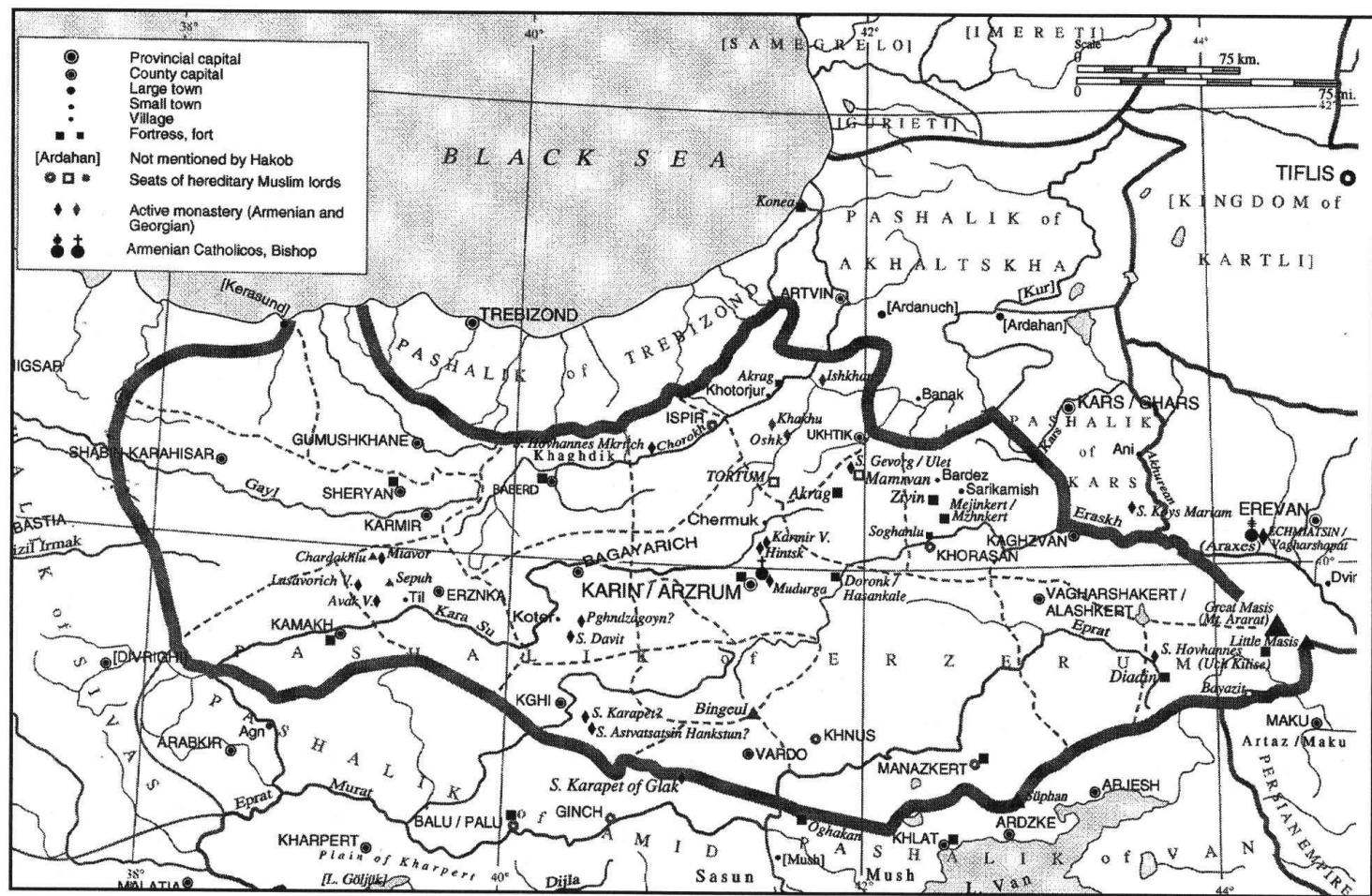
With the coming of the Seljuk Turks, who captured the city in 1080, most of Upper Armenia passed to vassal Turkmen emirs (Saltukids), who remained in control until ousted by the Seljuk sultan in around 1202. The western part of Upper Armenia was ruled by another vassal Turkmen dynasty, the Mangujakids, who eventually set up separate emirates at Erzinjan, Divrig, and Shabin-Karahisar. Overrun by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, Upper Armenia remained part of the Mongol Ilkhanid successor state until its disintegration in the fourteenth century. In about 1374 much of Upper Armenia passed to the Kara Koyunlu (Black Sheep) Turkmen clans and then in 1468 to their rivals of the Ak Koyunlu (White Sheep) federation. Turkmen rule was briefly interrupted by the invasions and occupation of Timur (Tamerlane) and his heirs between 1397 and 1408. Later fought over by the Safavid Persians and the Ottoman Turks, the Erzerum region passed to the Ottomans during the reign of Sultan Selim (1512-20). When Sultan Suleiman marched through the area on a campaign in 1534, he made most of western Armenia into the large *pashalik* or military governorship of Erzerum. It was at this time that the fortress city was rebuilt as the administrative center and a great military base, which it has remained ever since. Despite the Turkish occupation of the major towns and cities of Upper Armenia, the countryside continued to be preponderantly Armenian until the early nineteenth century.³⁹

Ottoman Erzerum

For a long time, Upper Armenia formed part of the large Erzerum pashalik under its *beylerbey*. A fascinating picture of the pashalik is provided by the Armenian cleric Hakob Karnetsi, who has left a detailed description of the military province as it

³⁸ Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, pp. 87-88n83.

³⁹ Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 281-91; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 1001, s.v. "Saltuk Oghulları"; John E. Woods, *The Aqqyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999).

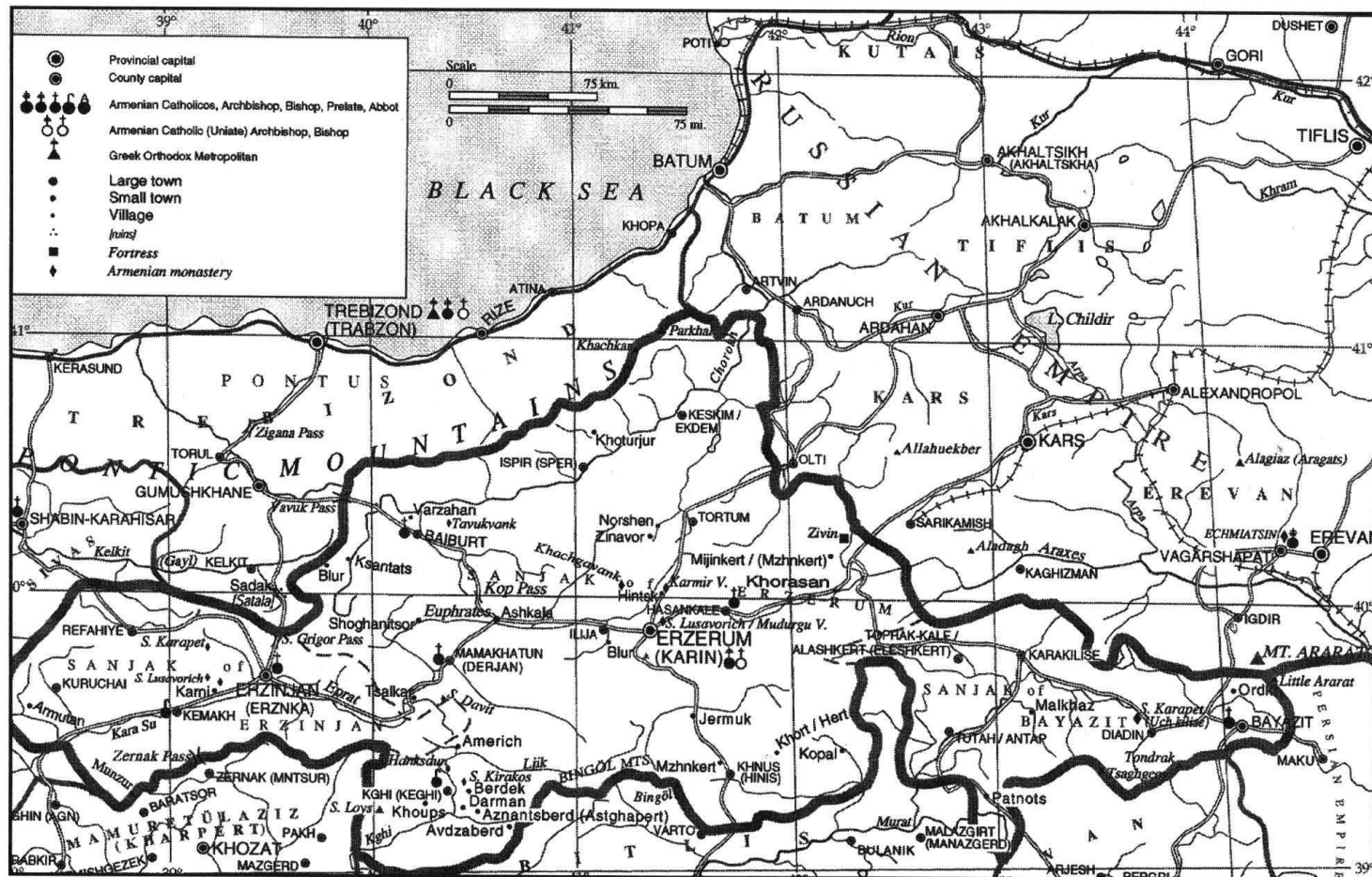


was in the seventeenth century, when its population was still overwhelmingly Armenian.⁴⁰ Lying as it did along the much-traveled caravan route between Tabriz and Trebizond and on the main roads eastward to Kars and westward to Erzinjan, the city of Erzerum frequently appeared in the travel accounts of merchants, ambassadors, and explorers who passed that way. In 1865 the eastern pashaliks of the Ottoman Empire were grouped into one large *eyalet* (governor-generalship). Ten years later, however, this unwieldy administrative unit was broken up into the six vilayets (civil provinces) of Erzerum, Van, Hakkari, Bitlis, Khozat (Dersim), and Kars-Childir—the last being lost to the Russians in 1878 and Khozat being attached to the vilayet of Mamuret ul-Aziz (Kharpert) in 1888.⁴¹ The only important change made in the administration of the Erzerum vilayet was the reduction of the *sanjak* of Baiburt to a *kaza* (district) of the Erzinjan sanjak in 1888. Other minor changes included the transfer of the kazas of Shiran and Kelkit in the Erzerum sanjak to the Trebizond vilayet that same year, and the transfer of the the kaza of Kuzijan (Khuzuchan) from Mamuret ul-Aziz to Erzerum in 1892-93. These civil provinces were retained until after World War I when the Kemalist government broke the vilayets into smaller, more manageable units called *ils*, usually based on the former sanjaks.

The vilayet of Erzerum encompassed an area of some 76,720 square kilometers (29,920 square miles) and was divided into three sanjaks and nineteen kazas: Erzerum sanjak with the kazas of Erzerum, Ova, Kghi, Terjan, Khnus, Tortum, Keskin, and Passin (Basen); Erzinjan sanjak with the kazas of Erzinjan, Refayie (Refayet), Kuruchai, Kemakh, Baiburt, and Ispir (Sper); and Bayazit (Bayazed) sanjak with the kazas of Bayazit, Diadin, Karakilise, Alashkert (Alashgerd), and Antab. The kazas of the province were subdivided into more than 150 village clusters or cantons known as *nahiyes*. Because of these administrative divisions, there was virtually no town that was not an administrative

⁴⁰ Hakovb Karnetsi [Jacob of Karin] "Erzeroum ou topographie de la Haute Arménie," trans. F. Macler, *Journal Asiatique* (March-April 1919): 153-237.

⁴¹ Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1908* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 39.



The *Vilayet* of Erzerum in the Late Nineteenth Century

center of one kind or another.⁴² The Erzerum vilayet, together with the remaining five Armenian vilayets, was defended by the IV Army Corps, headquartered at Erzinjan and composed of some 36,000 troops of all services, with the Eighth Infantry Division posted at Erzerum. The troops were supplemented by a regiment of four gendarme battalions numbering about 1,200 men, slightly more than half of whom were mounted.⁴³

Under Ottoman rule, Erzerum long flourished as the most important way station for traders transporting goods between Persia and Constantinople via the Black Sea and as a bastion of Ottoman defenses in the east. As a result of the shift in trade routes brought about by the Age of Exploration, however, the city began to decline. Taken by the Russians in 1829 and 1878, Erzerum was returned each time to the Ottomans, prompting large numbers of Armenians to abandon the city and surrounding villages to follow the tsarist armies into the Russian Empire. Thus, even today the Erzerum dialect is widely spoken in the northernmost districts of the Armenian republic as well as in the Akhalkalak (Javakheti; Javakhk) and Akhaltskha (Akhaltsikh) districts of southern Georgia.⁴⁴

Population

As with most of the other vilayets of the Ottoman Empire, population statistics for Erzerum are contradictory, both in sheer

⁴² Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 132-34, 138; Krikorian, *Armenians*, p. 40; T.Kh. Hakobyan, St. T. Melik-Bakhshyan, H.Kh. Barseghyan, *Hayastani ev harakits shrjanneri teghanunneri bararan* [Toponymical Dictionary of Armenia and Neighboring Regions], 5 vols. (Erevan: Erevan State University, 1986-2001), vol. 2, pp. 365-67. Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Papoudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman à la veille du Génocide* (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire ARHIS, 1992), pp. 417, 452, 457, maps, shows more than 375 villages in the Erzerum vilayet inhabited entirely or partly by Armenians. See also Sukias Eprikian, *Patkerazard bnashkharhik bararan* [Illustrated Topographical Dictionary], 2 vols. (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1902-1907), vol. 2, pp. 299-325.

⁴³ Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 136.

⁴⁴ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 68-69, 226; Hakob Adjarian, *Classification des dialectes arméniens* (Paris: H. Champion, 1909), pp. 44-47. According to Tarbassian, 14,000 Armenians who left Erzerum in 1829 settled in the Akhalkalak and Akhaltsikh districts.

numbers and in the relative proportions of the several ethno-religious groups. Ormanian's figures appear moderate and reasonable, although this does not necessarily make them precise. McCarthy's figures, while "corrected" to compensate for the undercounting of women, do not appear to be corrected enough. The following statistics are those found in the major sources:

Vital Cuinet (circa 1890)⁴⁵

Muslim	500,782
Armenian Apostolic	120,273
Armenian Catholic	12,022
Armenian Protestant	2,672
Greek Orthodox	3,725
Yabanji [Aliens]	4,986
Ejnebi [Foreigners]	1,220
Copt	16
Jew	6
TOTAL	645,702

Maghakia Ormanian

(Armenians in Eight Dioceses of Erzerum Vilayet, 1910)⁴⁶

Armenian Apostolic	190,000
Armenian Catholic	9,500
Armenian Protestant	3,900
TOTAL	203,400

Armenian Patriarchate (1912)⁴⁷

Armenian	215,000
Zaza and Other	30,000
Turk	240,000

⁴⁵ Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 137-38. The Armenian Patriarchate's statistics for 1882 show 280,000 Armenians in the province of Erzerum. See Patriarcat de Constantinople, *Population arménienne de la Turquie avant la guerre: Statistiques établies par le Patriarcat Arménien de Constantinople* (Paris: H. Turabian, 1920), Annex A, p. 9, and *Réponse au mémoire de la Sublime-Porte en date du 12 février 1919* (Constantinople, 1919), Annex C, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Malachia [Maghakia] Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia* (London: Mowbray, 1910; New York: St. Vartan Press, 1955), Appendix II, pp. 205-06.

⁴⁷ *Population arménienne de la Turquie avant la guerre*, Annex B, p. 10.

Kizilbash (Shiite Muslim)	25,000
Nomadic Kurd	40,000
Sedentary Kurd	35,000
Persian	13,000
Laz	10,000
Circassian	7,000
Greek and Other Christian	12,000
Yezidi	3,000
TOTAL	630,000

Ottoman Census (1914)⁴⁸

Muslim	673,297
Armenian Apostolic	125,657
Armenian Catholic	8,720
Greek Orthodox	4,859
Greek Catholic	5
Protestant	2,241
Roman Catholic (Latin)	1
Syrian Orthodox	88
Chaldean (Assyrian Catholic)	13
Yezidi	618
Jew	10
Gypsy	29
TOTAL	815,432

Justin McCarthy (for 1911-12)⁴⁹

Muslim	804,388
Syrian Nestorian and Chaldean	121
Armenian	163,218
Jew	10
Greek	5,811
Other	648
TOTAL	974,196

⁴⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 188-89.

⁴⁹ Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 53-58.

Large numbers of Kurds were still tribal-based confederations, of which two were semi-autonomous. They had settled in the province, along with Greeks and Persians, who were found only in the towns. According to McCarthy, the annual birthrate for the vilayet of Erzerum was 49 per thousand, the death rate 35 per thousand, the net gain being 14 per thousand per year, about average for Anatolia. Life expectancy at birth was estimated at thirty years. The population density for the vilayet of Erzerum is given as about 18 per square kilometer, and the proportion of Armenians to the total population is placed at 16.75 percent.⁵⁰ McCarthy's figures for the Armenian population, as well as its proportion of the total, appear to be underestimated.

Ecclesiastical Organization

An archbishop resided in Karin/Erzerum since its foundation, and there were bishops at Erzinjan, Baiburt, Hasankale, and Bayazit and prelates at Kghi and Kemakh. The vilayet was divided into eight dioceses of the Armenian Apostolic Church, with an archbishop residing in the provincial capital. The archdiocese of Karin or Garin had 90 parishes, 89 churches, and about 75,000 adherents. There were bishops at Erzinjan (Erznka/Erzinga), with 37 parishes, 44 churches, 25,000 adherents; Baiburt (Baberd), with 30 parishes, 31 churches, 17,000 adherents; Terjan (Derjan), 38 parishes, 33 churches, 15,000 adherents; Hasankale (Basen), 30 parishes, 19 churches, 10,000 adherents; and Bayazit (Bagrevand), 50 parishes, 33 churches, 14,000 adherents; and Kghi (Khortsian), 56 parishes, 51 churches, 24,000 adherents. An abbot served as prelate at Kemakh (Kamakh), 19 parishes, 21 churches, 10,000 adherents.⁵¹

Based on Ormanian's figures, it is clear that many Armenian parishes, probably consisting of isolated villages, were without churches and perhaps even without priests. The diocese of Erzerum was an important one, and its acquisition could lead to further advancement. Three patriarchs of Constantinople—Harutiun Vehapetian (1874-84), Maghakia Ormanian (1896-1908),

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 41, 43.

⁵¹ Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, Appendix II, pp. 205-06.

and Zaven Ter-Eghiayan (Der Yeghiayan, 1913-22)—had previously served as prelate of Karin. Despite Karin's prestige as a diocese, the Apostolic Armenians possessed only one church in Erzerum itself, the Cathedral of Surb Astvatsatsin, constructed in 1838, along with a small but very old chapel said to have been built in 629. In addition, there were a number of smaller shrines in the city: Surb Toros, Surb Sahak and Surb Hovsep, Surb Minas, Surb Varvara, Surb Nshan, Surb Pargevatu, and Nahatakats Tapan.⁵²

Jesuit missionaries had been active in Erzerum from 1685,⁵³ and from 1815 to 1915 the city was the seat of an Armenian Catholic archbishop (reduced to a bishop in 1890) whose jurisdiction encompassed the entire province. According to Bishop Jean (Hovhannes) Naslian, this was the most important and best organized Roman Catholic diocese in Armenia. The chief Catholic communities were to be found in the thirteen exclusively Armenian Catholic villages in the Khodorchur (Khotorjur) valley: Khodorchur, Kerman, Sunints, Keghud, Areki, Gakhmekhud, Veri-Moghrgoyd, Vari-Moghrgoyd, Garmerik, Kisag, Jijabagh, Khentadzor, and Veri-Khentadzor.⁵⁴ The Armenian Catholics had a single church in Erzerum, also called Surb Astvatsatsin. Erected in 1840 and serving as their cathedral, it was located in the so-called Frank Quarter, where the small European and American communities resided.⁵⁵ There was also a small but very beautiful Orthodox church, the seat of a Greek metropolitan. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had established a mission station in Erzerum as early as 1839.⁵⁶ By 1847 it had a fine, American-style Protestant church equipped with an elaborate wooden bell-tower.

⁵² Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 35-36, 39-41.

⁵³ Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 180.

⁵⁴ Jean Naslian, *Les mémoires de Mgr. Jean Naslian, Évêque de Trébizonde*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1951), vol. 1, p. 147.

⁵⁵ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, p. 36.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38; H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies*, vol. 2 (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1901), p. 217.

The City of Karin

Karin or Erzerum lay in a fertile plain surrounded by high mountains at an elevation of more than 2,000 meters or 6,500 feet and covering about 10 square kilometers (4 square miles). Divided into numerous quarters, it had more than 7,200 houses in the latter part of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Ottoman from the sixteenth century, Erzerum was not only the vilayet capital but also the center of the entire defensive system protecting the eastern provinces from a Russian invasion and hence shielding much of Asiatic Turkey. Despite its strength, however, the city fell to the Russians in 1829, 1878, and again in 1916—an indication of how enervated the Ottoman Empire had become.⁵⁸ Erzerum was also the main intermediary point along the Black Sea to Persia route (Trebizond to Tabriz) established by the Genoese in the Mongol period. As late as the 1890s, some 30,000 to 40,000 camels laden with goods still passed through the city in large caravans, about two-thirds of the trade being of English manufacture. A British commercial agent was in residence in the city by 1690, and steamers began carrying this trade on the Black Sea in 1836, replacing the sailing vessels of old. The trade with Persia accounted for the relatively large number of Persians residing in Erzerum, where until the latter part of the nineteenth century they had their own quarter. The principal industries in the city were the manufacture of arms and armaments and the tanning of hides.

The population of Karin varied greatly in the nineteenth century, due largely to the emigration of more than 10,000 Armenians when the Russian army departed in 1829. It is reported that only 120 Armenian families—1,000 to 2,000 persons—remained in Erzerum thereafter. The Armenians gradually became a minority both in the city and in the province. The total population of the city in 1835 was estimated at 15,000, whereas by 1890 it had grown to about 40,000, not counting the military garrison of 5,000 to 6,000 men. Described by Lynch as a somber, unattrac-

⁵⁷ Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 183.

⁵⁸ Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 187, 192; Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 64-66; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, pp. 160-61.

tive place with solidly built stone houses with few trees, Erzerum has the advantage of being extremely well watered. The walls, built by the Romans when they founded the city, were torn down in the mid-nineteenth century, and new ones, fronted with ditches and pierced by four main gates, were erected between 1855 and 1877. These ramparts embraced an area of 7.75 square kilometers or 3 square miles, but the town itself occupied only a third of this area.⁵⁹

The location of Erzerum close to the main Anatolian fault line resulted in its being struck by severe earthquakes, explaining why so few monuments of earlier eras survive. An earthquake in 1859 destroyed or damaged some 4,500 houses, toppled nine minarets, and seriously damaged much of the earlier walls.⁶⁰ The city, however, still contained many mosques, including the Ulu Jami or Great Mosque, probably a former church, the Chifte Minare, located in a central court close to the fortress, and the Lala Pasha Mosque, as well as the palace of the *vali* or civil governor and that of the military governor.

The Armenian schools of Karin included, above all, the Sanasarian *Varzharan* or Academy, equipped with a library and a museum. Founded in 1881 by an Armenian philanthropist, it was essentially a teacher-training institution. In addition, there were six boys' schools and one girls' school operated by the Armenian Church, one Catholic school staffed by four French priests, a "collège" (more of a preparatory school) of the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist order of Venice, a girls' school of the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and one boys' school and one girls' school maintained by the Protestant community. The Kavafian school established in 1905 broke with tradition by teaching elementary grades with boys and girls under the same roof. The Muslims had numerous religious schools (*medreses*) but only one modern school—though a good one—located in a new building which served as both high school (*rushdiye*) and lycée (*idadiye*), the only such Muslim institution in the province. There were also fifteen monasteries (*tekkes*) of Muslim dervish orders, thirteen inns (*khans*), 225 fountains, and

⁵⁹ Lynch, *Armenia*, pp. 206-10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

a small public garden. As the largest city in the eastern provinces, Erzerum was the residence of British, French, German, Persian, and Russian consuls or diplomatic agents.⁶¹

After the Young Turk revolution in 1908, Armenians were freer to develop their culture with less interference from the authorities, and the city began to progress. The first regular local Armenian newspaper, *Harach* [Forward], was published that year, the first cinema opened, and dramatic performances by touring companies from Constantinople and Transcaucasia became common. The choral masters Armenak Shahmuratian and Grigor Siuni formed choruses on their visits, and musical groups were organized, especially the military band of the Sanasarian school and the string orchestra of the Armenian Catholic lycée.⁶² Notable descendants of Armenian Karin who contributed immeasurably to the intellectual and academic life of Tiflis and Erevan include the renowned historian Hakob Manandian, philologists Stepan Malkhasiants, Manuk Abeghian, and Hovhannes Ghannalanian, geologist Hovhannes Ter-Karapetian, and actors Arus Voskanian, Ruzanna Vardanian, and Vanik Vardanian. Among the native heroes of the Armenian resistance movement were Khachatur Kerechtsian, Ashot Tatul, Armen Garo (Garegin Padermajian), Keri (Arshak Gavafian), Garegin Karnetsi (Ghroyan), and Aram Erkanian.⁶³

Towns

Erzinjan (Erznka)

Erzinjan (now Erzincan), located about 175 kilometers (120 miles) west of Erzerum, was the second largest city in the vilayet, with a population in 1914 of some 25,000, of whom about half were Armenian. The city was surrounded by numerous villages, of which about 30 were entirely or partly Armenian (among them Akhorjiugh, Degeneg, Ergan, Garmri, Gharadigin,

⁶¹ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 99-114; Lynch, *Armenia*, pp. 213-18; Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 184-85.

⁶² Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 83-87, 228-29.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-80.

Giulija, Harabedi, Hromakrag, Khndzorig, Mahmudtsig, Meghutsig, Merteghi, Metsakrag, Mtnni, Ptarij, Srbihan, Veri-Chiftlik, and Vari-Chiftlik) with some 40 churches, and about 60 such villages in the sanjak as a whole. The total population of the Armenian villages was some 45,000 people or an average of slightly more than 700 inhabitants per village. Erzinjan was an important center of trade and was noted for its textiles and dried fruit. It was also the base for a large, permanent military garrison.⁶⁴

Baiburt (Baberd/Papert)

According to Henry Tozer, Baiburt was a relatively small place, with about 2,000 households, of which 300 were Christian. It was nonetheless an important commercial center on the main road from Erzerum to Trebizond, renowned for the fine quality of its fruit, vegetables, and grain. There were silver mines in its vicinity, and its hilltop was still crowned by a long, rambling fortress. On the road to Trebizond at the village of Varzahan were the ruins of three magnificent medieval Armenian churches that were vandalized by the Kurds in the nineteenth century.⁶⁵ In the kaza there were 29 partially or wholly Armenian-inhabited villages with about 40 Armenian Apostolic churches and several monasteries.⁶⁶

Hinis (Khnus) and Kghi (Keghi)

The town of Hinis (Armenian: Khnis or Khnus), capital of the kaza of that name, lay in the center of a broad, fertile, well-watered plain, which had once formed the ancient principality of

⁶⁴ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, p. 30; Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 211-13; Eprikian, *Bnashkharhik bararan*, vol. 1, p. 632. For details, see the memorial volume of Galust Siurmenian, *Erznka* (Cairo: Sahak-Mesrop, 1947).

⁶⁵ See also Henry Fanshawe Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1881), pp. 423-27; Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 151; Eprikian, *Bnashkharhik bararan*, vol. 1, pp. 337-38; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, p. 163. For details on the Baiburt district, see Sargis Voskerchyan, *Mer Bayburde* [Our Baiburt] (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1956).

⁶⁶ Kévorkian and Papoudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman*, pp. 439-42.

Varazhnunik and was noted for its fine wheat, barley, and pasturage and for its excellent butter and cheese. Eprikian cited 24 Christian or predominantly Christian villages in the kaza, which had 15 churches and 7 mosques.⁶⁷

Located in a seemingly remote valley, the town of Kghi was connected by a trade route linking Erzerum with Mush, Bitlis, and Kharpert. Because of close contact with the American mission station at Kharpert, it possessed its own schools and many of its inhabitants eventually made their way to America. The narrow valley in which the town was set and its thick forests made the area unsuitable for agriculture, but the local people managed to develop a large export of medicinal herbs, fruit, charcoal, and cattle. The district was heavily Christian, the kaza having 38 churches and 17 mosques. Here, near Astghberd (Astghapert), were located the Monastery of Surb Kirakos and one of several mountains in Armenia called Surb Loys (Holy Light).⁶⁸

The Rural Areas

In the vicinity of Erzerum were large tracts of marshland along the uppermost reaches of the Euphrates, known in ancient times as Tsovn Karno (Sea of Karin), and in later periods as Lake Shamik or Shamp to the Armenians and as Saz or Sazlek to the Turks. Here an extraordinary variety of wading birds—some say as many as 170 species (storks, cranes, herons, egrets, ibises, and so forth)—were to be observed, the birds being hunted for food and their eggs forming an important element in the local diet.⁶⁹ In the 1890s, however, the depredations of the Kurds had created a state of lawlessness and insecurity that was making rural life impossible even for the Muslim villagers, while the Christians were departing in large numbers every year. By 1909, there were fewer than 50 Armenian-inhabited villages remaining in the kaza

⁶⁷ Eprikian, *Bnashkharhik bararan*, vol. 2, pp. 185-86; Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 28-29; Eprikian, *Bnashkharhik bararan*, vol. 2, pp. 355-63.

⁶⁹ Lynch, *Armenia*, p. 209; Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, p. 24.

of Erzerum. Some 32 monasteries still functioned—however feebly—in the vilayet at the turn of the twentieth century. Among these, three of the most important were in the immediate vicinity of the provincial capital:

1. Surb Lusavorich (Holy Enlightener) was about one and a half hour's walk from the city at the village of Mudurga. Built like a fortress, it was a pilgrimage site and possessed considerable lands and great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep.

2. Khachkavank (Monastery of the Cross) was located at Khachkavank village about 5 miles north of the city. Said to date from 639, it was surrounded by massive walls.

3. Karmir Vank (Red Monastery), known in Western Armenian pronunciation as Garmra Surp Asdvadzadzna Vank (Red Monastery of the Holy Mother of God) was located near the village of Hintsk (Hindzk) about five hours' walk from the city. The monastery church, destroyed in an earthquake in 1770 and rebuilt in 1800, was an especially magnificent structure. It was a popular pilgrimage site and a great resort for Armenians escaping the summer heat. The monastery was a center of education and maintained its own orphanage, hospital, and leprosarium.⁷⁰

There were also several monasteries still functioning near Erzinjan and in the surrounding mountains: Surb Lusavorich, Avag Vank, Til, and Tordan. The most important monastery in the vilayet, however, was that of Surb Hovhannes Mkrtich (Saint John the Baptist), far to the east near Bayazit. Known to the Muslims as Uch Kilise (Three Churches), this monastery marked the spot on the Aratsani (Lower Euphrates) River where Saint Gregory had baptized the royal family and court at the time of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity in the early fourth century.⁷¹

Karin during the Genocide

As the largest city in Turkish Armenia, Erzerum became a focal point of resistance activity after the failure of the sultan to fulfill his pledges to implement reforms to safeguard the lives and

⁷⁰ Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 42-46.

⁷¹ Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), map 165; Tozer, *Turkish Armenia*, pp. 392-94.

properties of the Armenian population. Bloody repressions began in 1890, and in 1895 the province was subjected to the same atrocities that befell all the rest of Turkish Armenia. The massacres and plunder began at Trebizond on October 8, reached Erzinjan on October 21 (260 killed in the town and some 850 in the surrounding villages), the Baiburt villages and then the town itself starting on October 27, and Erzerum on October 30 (several hundred slain and the bazaar completely sacked).⁷²

In the Genocide of 1915, the entire Armenian population of the vilayet of Erzerum—Apostolic, Catholic, and Protestant—was deported, the men slain and the women and children sent on to die en route to the Syrian desert. Convoys left from Erzinjan, Kghi, and Baiburt at about the same time. On May 19 the Armenians of Khnus were deported and soon after massacred. In May and June, the Armenian villages in the Erzerum plain were cleared, with few of the deportees even getting beyond Kemakh. The city dwellers were sent off in several convoys between June 16 and July 28, when Bishop Smbat Saatetian left the city, only to be murdered near Erzinjan. In Baiburt, Bishop Anania Hazarapetian was hanged. The German consul at Erzerum, seeing what was happening, informed his ambassador in Constantinople but was instructed to stay out of Ottoman internal affairs. The Ottoman governor directing these deportations was Tahsin Bey, who had formerly been governor of Van and who was noted for his devotion to the Young Turk leadership in Constantinople.⁷³ When the Russian army occupied Erzerum on February 16, 1916, after the Turks had plundered and abandoned the city, scarcely a hundred Armenians were found alive out of an Armenian population of some 20,000. It is estimated that as much as 90 percent of the Armenian population of the province perished.

⁷² Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom, Helm, 1980), pp. 156-59.

⁷³ On the deportations and massacres in Erzerum, see Great Britain, Parliament, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce*, Miscellaneous no. 31, 1916, comp. and ed. Arnold J. Toynbee (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons, 1916), pp. 221-56; Tarbassian, *Erzurum*, pp. 231-44; Walker, *Armenia*, pp. 214-15; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, pp. 148-69. See also the chapter by Simon Payaslian in this volume.

Erzerum Today

The vilayet of Erzerum, though occasionally altered in size by the addition or subtraction of one district or another, generally corresponded to the historic Armenian land of Bardzr Hayk. During the Kemalist period after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the province was broken down into smaller administrative units called *ils*. Upper Armenia as a unit of any kind thus no longer exists. The city of Erzerum remains a major military center, and with about a quarter of a million inhabitants is one of the few cities in eastern Anatolia where the Turkish element is preponderant. The railroad reached Erzerum in 1939, bus lines connect it to other towns and cities in all directions, industrial enterprises have been established, and there are now several good hotels. Atatürk University was founded there in 1950. Erzinjan, destroyed yet again by earthquake in 1939, has been moved to a new site off the Anatolian fault and is now a modern town of broad, regular streets and wide plazas.

Having visited this part of historic Armenia in 1998 and again the following year, I was struck by the extraordinary beauty of its landscape. Though for some reason, Erzerum itself has tended to impress travelers in a negative way since at least the nineteenth century and the city has often been described as harsh and unattractive, the region in which it is located is wonderful to view. Bounded by mountains on the north and south which repeatedly close in to separate one level expanse from another, its natural division into several plains is easily seen. The broad, shallow waters of the Euphrates surge westwards through colorful canyons and pasture lands, and, at the end of the day, seem to lead one directly toward the sunset. Everywhere, this Bosom of the Earth, this Upper Armenia, continually impresses one with its unforgettable grandeur.